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## **ADLER'S AMBIGUITY ABOUT THE CONCEPT OF THE DYNAMIC UNCONSCIOUS AND THE IDENTITY OF INDIVIDUAL PSYCHOLOGY**

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In the present article attention is drawn to the fact that Individual Psychology is understood in Europe, but not in America, as a depth-psychology (or psychoanalysis) -- in theory as well as in practice. These different views of Individual Psychology, and consequently, the thesis of this paper is closely connected with Adler's ambiguity about the concept of the dynamic unconscious. First, the concept of the dynamic unconscious according to Freud is reviewed and it is shown that Freud's concept is not followed consistently in all of Adler's writings. Second, it is demonstrated accordingly that Adler put forward two distinct views of the psychotherapy of Individual Psychology. Third, the implications of this fundamental contradiction for the international debate are pointed out.

### **1. Introduction**

In the midst of their acrimonious split in 1911, Freud asserted that Adler's theories:-

"...will make a deep impression and do great harm to Psychoanalysis in the near future. This enormous impression comes from two sources: 1) Unmistakably, a significant intellect with a gift for presentation is at work in these

matters, but 2) The entire doctrine has a reactionary and retrogressive character and thus offers a great number of pleasure premiums. Instead of psychology, it presents in large part biology, and instead of psychology of the unconscious it presents surface ego psychology".

Freud went on to say that Adler's theories were not Psychoanalysis, but "something quite different". These remarks were made on 1 February 1911 when Freud criticised Adler's lecture on the "masculine protest" at the Wednesday Society (Federn and Nunberg, 1962/1979, p. 144). Freud had no way of knowing that he was opening a discussion that still goes on today. Within Individual Psychology this is expressed in continuous factional debates about the very essence of Adler's theory:

- Above all, many North American members of the International Association of Individual Psychology share the view that Adler actually broke with the theory of the unconscious. They contend that for precisely that reason Individual Psychology stands outside of the general frame of Psychoanalysis (Silverman, 1985; Dreikurs-Ferguson, 1987).
- However, other groups maintain that Individual Psychology is inconceivable without the notion of the unconscious. In particular, from the point of view of many Central European Individual Psychologists, Individual Psychology is understood as a depth psychology which is established within the psychoanalytic tradition (Schmidt, 1985; Antoch, 1987; Datler, 1992a,b; Lehmkuhl & Lehmkuhl, 1994, 1995).

People who follow relevant discussions within the International Association of Individual Psychology know that differing opinions about Individual Psychology are expressed fiercely, so that, for instance, at international conferences it is difficult to recognise a common identity across factions. One might well ask how, within the International Association of Individual Psychology, we could have arrived at these disparate interpretations of Individual

Psychology. Such a question can not be answered satisfactorily in a single article. Nevertheless, I intend to: 1) show that these different interpretations of Individual Psychology are closely related to Adler's ambiguous presentation of his theories; 2) indicate that the different interpretations of Individual Psychology lead to different forms of psychotherapy; and 3) comment briefly on the question of whether the existence of such different interpretations of Individual Psychology are to be regretted or welcomed.

## **2. Sigmund Freud, Alfred Adler and the concept of the Dynamic Unconscious**

To find support for my claim that the different interpretations of Individual Psychology are closely linked to Adler's presentation of his theories, I return to those meetings of the Wednesday Society, where in 1911 Alfred Adler attempted to differentiate his position from Freud's (Adler, 1911a, b; Nunberg & Federn, 1962/1979, p. 102).

In those meetings on the 4th of January and the 1st of February 1911, Adler addressed the question of how neurotic conditions develop and how much significance might be attached to the moment of repression. As is well known Adler (1911a, b) criticised Freud for being too easily satisfied with explanations. He claimed that after Freud came across evidence of repression in his analyses, he immediately postulated that neurotic symptoms ultimately stemmed from such repressions. Adler countered that the repression of libidinal wishes, and consequently the development of neurotic symptoms, only occur if a person previously developed the desire to protect her/himself from experiencing inferiority, smallness and weakness. Adler went on to suggest that the desire for protection and safeguarding may lead secondarily to the person experiencing worrying libidinal wishes that will be repressed and replaced by neurotic symptoms. According to Adler, the individual's original concern is to strive

for a secure feeling of strength, power and superiority. In this way Adler contradicted Freud, asserting that "neurosis is above all safeguarding" (Adler, 1911b, 104).

I am not only concerned with what motivated Freud and Adler to adopt their different points of view so inflexibly. Furthermore, I do not wish to engage at all in the feeble arguments with which each attempted to protect his own position, and at the same time to prove the other wrong. Rather I should like to make it clear that Freud's emphasis on repression and Adler's emphasis on safeguarding are at the root of the different emphases regarding the concept of the unconscious (and as a result, regarding the concept of psychotherapy).

### 2.1 The concept of the dynamic unconscious

First I turn to Freud's *Reflections on a Theory of the Unconscious*, and in this context, remind the reader of one of his earliest papers on psychoanalysis with the title *A Case of Successful Treatment by Hypnotism* (Freud, 1892/93, Standard Edition, Vol. I, 1966). This paper reports on two hysterical female patients, each of whom was unable to follow her expressed wishes in important areas of her life:

- One of the patients was unable to breast feed her baby, although she explicitly wanted to.
- The other patient was unable to have an uninterrupted conversation because she was troubled by a tic-like tongue clicking.

Freud treated both patients with hypnosis and concluded that each woman harboured other wishes alongside those she explicitly expressed. Besides the desire to breast feed the baby or to have uninterrupted conversations, other contradictory ideas seemed to exist, which Freud called "opposing thoughts":

- With one patient the opposing thought was not to be able to breast feed at all.
- With the other patient, the opposing thought was not to be able to stop uncontrolled utterances in socially delicate situations.

According to Freud, these opposing thoughts were associated with strong feelings of embarrassment and therefore could not be consciously perceived by either patient. As a result, this led to the development of a barely controllable counter will. This again was not consciously perceived by the patients and thus was able to prevail over the patients' conscious will. Freud expressed this in more general terms:

"(Firstly) in accordance with the tendency to a dissociation of consciousness in hysteria, the distressing antithetic idea, which seems to be inhibited, is removed from association with the intention and continues to exist as a disconnected idea, often unconsciously to the patient himself. The antithetic idea establishes itself, so to speak, as a counterwill, while the patient is aware with astonishment of having a will which is resolute but powerless" (Freud, 1892/93, Standard Edition, Vol. I, p 122).

From then on this basic concept of an unconscious 'counter will' can be found in Freud's theories. In modified form, we come across it again in the controversy with Adler when Freud speaks about repression. That is, the idea that conscious wishes or conscious choices may not be realised at all - or only conditionally - because people harbour simultaneous and strong opposing desires and opposing thoughts can be found in diverse form throughout Freud's writings. Indeed, it is on this basic premise that Freud expounded the fundamental psychoanalytic assumption of the dynamic unconscious. This assumption does not mean merely that some people, in certain respects, never become aware of large areas of their inner life. For if the idea of the unconscious is used only in a descriptive sense, the question regarding whether a person can ever bring non-conscious

material into consciousness remains open. Since for Freud this question was central, he stressed the need to differentiate between the broader concept of the descriptive unconscious and the specific concept of the dynamic unconscious (Freud, 1915; 1923). The following four characteristics of the dynamic unconscious are important for further discussion:

1. The concept of the dynamic unconscious means that human beings are constantly confronted by myriad "existing intrapsychic" contents of experience of which they themselves do not wish to become consciously aware. This is because human beings constantly and unconsciously fear that a conscious awareness of particular unconscious material would mean becoming aware consciously of extremely threatening feelings. In order to avoid conscious awareness of such feelings, according to Freud, people persistently employ specific unconscious defence mechanisms so that repression of such worrying contents of experience is guaranteed. Conscious awareness of such resisted material becomes possible only when specific resistance is alleviated and overcome.
2. Resisted material increases in complexity as conflicting wishes and desires accumulate. Not least from a desire to mitigate the extent of intrapsychic conflict, human beings unconsciously persist in resolving discrepancies among unconscious wishes and desires, as well as reconstructing experiences (for instance, by adopting a primary process strategy).
3. The multi-faceted unconscious activities, which are latent and beyond the barrier of "resistance", have immediate significance in relation to what a human being observably or consciously thinks, feels, experiences, etc. This is because all observable and consciously perceived activities of a human being are (at least as well) to be understood as an attempt to protect resisted material from reaching consciousness, while being expressed symbolically or in a distorted manner.

4. The assumption of a dynamic unconscious is consequently ubiquitous, which means that human beings constantly perceive at a subconscious level numerous "contents of experience" of which they constantly and subconsciously attempt to protect themselves from becoming consciously aware by arranging unconscious defences. If one is to understand observable human behaviour or conscious human experience psychoanalytically, one must look for the connection between the manifest psychic experience and the corresponding moment in the dynamic unconscious. Expressed casually: What a person experiences "beyond the unconscious defence barrier" and which activities she/he places beyond this "defence barrier", are always essential elements of psychoanalytic understanding.

The development of a theory of the dynamic unconscious received Freud's full attention from then on. Consequently, his explanation of the theory of the unconscious deals with the central and multi-faceted question regarding:

- how this process of resistance of specific contents of experience can be understood in detail;
- how a subtly differentiated theory can be developed which deals with those psychic activities and contents of experience which are presumed to be beyond the barriers of resistance "in the unconscious";
- and how on the one hand, a connection between latent unconscious psychic activities and contents of experience beyond the barrier of resistance can be decided and on the other hand, how manifest psychic phenomenon can be made conscious and accessible to observation.

Freud's attempts to find answers to these questions have led to the development of complex theories about the dynamic unconscious, as can be found, for example, in his "Studies on Hysteria" (Freud, 1895), *Interpretation of Dreams* (Freud, 1900), *The Ego and the Id* (1923) or *Inhibition, Fear and Symptom* (1926).<sup>(1)</sup>

In these complex theoretical formulations about the dynamic unconscious, a large number of different unconscious forms of resistance - as well as various experiments - were discussed in an effort to determine the role of the "censor" more precisely. In *Interpretation of Dreams*, Freud placed the "censor" at the boundary of the unconscious and the preconscious. In these theories we find numerous speculations about the origin and maintenance of the dynamic unconscious and the status of the boundary between the somatic and the psychic. Freud repeatedly addressed the question of how the dynamic unconscious is structured and to what extent discrete unconscious contents of experience are linked with each other. In Freud's view, numerous answers can be found in relation to how discrete contents and larger areas of the dynamic unconscious can be changed unconsciously through processes such as "delayed gratification", "condensation", "inhibition", "wish fulfilment" and "vicarious satisfaction" and the varied consequences of these changes for the manifest psychic experience. Freud's explanations and conviction make it clear that the "psychoanalytic view" of human life and experience must always be directed towards current activities and contents of experience that belong to the dynamic unconscious.

## 2.2 Adler's ambiguity about the concept of the dynamic unconscious

Now, what did Adler say about the concept of the unconscious? In order to approach this question, I must return to Adler's concept of safeguarding. This is because in his writings Adler stressed that human beings are compelled to follow certain fictions and guidelines because of their drive to safeguard - with the hope that in this way they might escape feelings of insecurity and inferiority (e.g. Adler, 1912a/1972, p. 64).



Adler seems to have assumed that the experience of certain feelings of insecurity and inferiority can be so threatening that human beings try to protect themselves from the conscious experiencing of such feelings. Furthermore, Adler seems to have assumed that safeguarding measures (such as those of idealisation or the devaluation of others) are activated so that such feelings of insecurity and inferiority may be excluded from conscious awareness (Adler 1911b, p. 112; 1913h, p. 240; 1937i/1944, p. 67).

In this sense Adler seems to accept, at least implicitly, the concept of the dynamic unconscious, and many authors accept this interpretation of Adler's writings. In this context I am reminded, for example:

- of Erwin Ringel and Walter Spiel, who emphasised in a 1952 *Psyche* article that Adler had shared at least implicitly the anthropological assumption of a dynamic unconscious (although it was conspicuous that he rarely used the word "unconscious" explicitly) (Ringel & Spiel, 1952/1987);
- of Rudolf Kausen, who emphasised in his often quoted expert report from 1973 that Adler's understanding of Individual Psychology was not conceivable without the assumption of unconscious psycho-dynamic processes, although, in his fierce dispute with Freud, Adler avoided the explicit use of the term unconscious (Kausen, 1973/1987, p. 78);
- of Robert F. Antoch, who in his book *From Communication to Co-operation* highlighted the extent to which Adler distanced himself from Freud's drive theory and Freud's process-model without giving up the concepts of repression and the unconscious (Antoch, 1981, p 66);
- of Tenbink (1985), Titze (1986), Huttanus (1987) or Lehmkuhl and Lehmkuhl (1994), who showed in particular that while the young Adler spoke about unity of the person, he held on to the concept of unconscious conflict.

To pick up the last point, an often laboured difference between the positions taken by early and late Adler (Heisterkamp, 1984; Witte, 1988, 1994), I should like to remind the reader that it is by no means straightforward to assert that Adler consistently subscribed to the above-outlined assumptions of the dynamic unconscious. On the contrary, Adler conveyed repeatedly in some passages of his writings the impression that he ignored or rejected the assumption of a dynamic unconscious.<sup>(2)</sup> To demonstrate this, I draw the reader's attention to five points that emerge from Adler's writing:

a. When Adler used the term "unconscious", he did not differentiate terminologically nor in terms of content between "unconscious" in the dynamic sense and "unconscious" in the descriptive sense. For example:-

"The dispute about the conscious and the unconscious is perhaps only a dispute about words. All movements, postures and expressions of a human being, including walking, are carried out without thinking. For that reason one probably says that it happens unconsciously" (Adler 1937i/1944, p. 66).

In passages like the above Adler terms "unconscious" those activities and contents of experience that a human being does not think about and does not notice. In such passages, Adler does not differentiate between non-conscious contents of experience that are fended off and other non-conscious contents of experience that simply are not consciously perceived because they are not at the moment the object of conscious perception, but could easily be perceived consciously at any time. Consequently, Adler asserted that generally the specific meaning of the concept of the dynamic unconscious was not important to him. To quote Adler further:

"For example, if one enters a room through a low door, one bumps one's head the first time, perhaps again a second and third time; for a while one thinks every time of the danger when standing in front of this door, but in the end bending becomes a habit - it becomes 'unconscious'" (Adler 1937i/1944, p. 66).

To ask, whether one can think about bending consciously at any time, or whether one resists consciously becoming conscious of bending, appears to have been of no importance to Adler.

b. While Adler sometimes expressed a view about individual topics in a way that might indicate that he accepted the concept of the unconscious, he rarely dealt with the question of what "happens" to the contents of experience when they are resisted. Such ideas are not only absent from many of his case studies, but also from his discussions of "memory". To clarify this I shall turn to a passage from the *Nervous Character* (Adler 1912a/1972, p.74):

"The apperceiving memory...works as if with a schema, a schematic fiction, and in correspondence with this fiction is the selection and moulding of our sensations, perceptions, experiences and memory. Our conscious and unconscious memory and its individual structure function in accordance with the personality ideal and its standards." (Adler, 1912a/1972, 74; translation aided by Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956/64, p 215).

In such passages Adler refers to the "selection and moulding of our sensations" on the one hand, and of "conscious and unconscious memory" on the other. This gives the impression that, among other things, Adler held that certain contents of experience would be unconsciously maintained, such that the fiction approximates the personality ideal and does not become threatened. What remains entirely unanswered is the question regarding whether Adler shared the view that these unconscious memories would be revised subsequently as resisted contents of

experience -- for example, in such a way that they are altered, shifted, condensed or reversed. Such ideas would be completely consistent with the concept of the dynamic unconscious.

In other published explanations on the topic of "memory" one often gets the impression that these sorts of ideas are not at all important to Adler, as the assumption of the resistance of unconscious material becomes less and less relevant to him. For example, in *The Meaning of Life*, Adler (1933b/1973a, p. 125) wrote:-

"To use a cannibalistic simile, one might say that the function of memory is to devour impressions and digest them" (Adler 1933b/1973a, p 125; translation aided by Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956/64, p 213).

Eating and digestion is simply followed by absorption, storage and/or excretion, but this is not so with intrapsychic resistance. Adler (1933b/1973a, p 126) continues:

"The individual apperception furnishes memory the perception in accordance with the uniqueness of the individual. The uniqueness of the individual takes over the impression that has been formed in this way and equips it with feelings and an attitude. What remains in this digestive process is what we want to call memory, whether this is expressed in words, in feelings or in an attitude toward the external world" (Adler 1933b/1973a, p 126; translation aided by Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956/64, p 214).

From Adler's point of view the memory that "remains" is shaped in accordance with the tendency to safeguard and the life style of the individual person. Whether one can assume that the memory that has been developed is suppressed or that the memory may continue to be modified in order to be kept away from conscious perception is never discussed. For Adler it is obviously not important to pay attention to the workings of a supposed dynamic unconscious. Consequently, the focus was not on the assumption of a dynamic unconscious when Adler dealt with the idea that

once-developed, memories sometimes are no longer at a person's disposal. In this context Adler (1933b/1973a, p 126) asserted that once-developed, impressions can also be banished from the memory:

"That is, memory can dispose of parts of the whole impression or the total impression" (Adler 1933b/1973a, p 126; translation aided by Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956/64, p 214).

Therefore, once these impressions "disappear", they will be excluded from the person's psychological structure and modification processes - and as a result, can never be the object of further resistance.

c. That the assumption of a dynamic unconscious was not compelling for Adler can also be taken from many other passages in which Adler endeavours to understand not only the origin of certain memories, but also the origin of certain other characteristics or symptom formations. For example in *The Structure of Neurosis* (1932i), Adler argues that individual forms of neurotic expression are in accordance with the life style of a human being who seeks to avoid big problems in life because he/she has the feeling of not having what it takes to confront these problems. In this account, Adler does not mention possible unconscious desires, fears, fantasies or resistance, as if it were unnecessary - or even inappropriate - to consider such categories of experience. To underline this impression, admittedly Adler concedes that neurotic connections are often not recognised clearly, and that in therapy they only become clear step-by-step. Nevertheless, he maintained unequivocally that in this context only the "uninitiated" might be tempted "to speak of the unconscious where mostly the incomprehensible is present" (Adler 1932i, p 270).

d. If one's attention is directed towards Adler's preference to speak of the "incomprehensible" and "lack of understanding", one can gather from his choice of terminology that Adler was not at all compelled to acknowledge a dynamic unconscious. Adler's repeated hints that patients who do not understand the significance of their symptoms, do not require suggestions that they make associations to that which they do not perceive consciously, and therefore wish to "maintain unconsciously". Adler's reference to "the lack of understanding" may also suggest that non-understanding patients have not yet made intrapsychic associations, and consequently, are not in a position to maintain them unconsciously. Similar to a student who cannot solve a mathematical problem because he/she has not yet developed the relevant mathematical understanding, non-understanding patients also are not able to solve their life-problems - not because they have resisted certain contents of experience, but rather because certain (undeveloped) contexts of understanding are not part of their "psychological make-up", and consequently, can not be pushed into the unconscious.

Moreover, in this context, we must consider whether Adler's intensive preoccupation with the concept of "compensation" expressed his preference for the concept of "unconscious resistance" - and consequently a de-emphasis regarding the concept of the "dynamic". Adler's discussion of "compensation" above all draws attention to the aspect of "overcoming", and as a result, to the moment certain situations of experience and (family) constellations are left behind, but less to the aspect of unconscious resistance of "existing" unconscious contents of experience and other intrapsychic "processes" that reside in such resistance (see Datler 1996, where Adler's concept of safeguarding is considered similarly).

e. Finally, one should not overlook the possibility that differences between "conscious" and "unconscious" were explicitly dismissed or regarded as being in error by Adler (e.g. 1932I, p. 33), because they contradicted his view of the indivisible nature of the

individual. In this sense, for example in the paper once again, *The Unity of Neurosis*, (Adler 1930j/1982b, p. 41) expressed his views opposing the psychoanalytic assumption that a large number of unconscious wishes, feelings and fears "are up to their tricks", and as resisted contents of experience have influence on the development of the conscious and perceptible contents of experience. The repudiation of the concept of the dynamic unconscious could not be more clearly expressed than when Adler spoke of the "lowly psychoanalysts" who cannot accept the individual psychologist's proof of the indivisibility of the individual, because in their "nervous inflexibility" they had overlooked how wrong it is to commit oneself to the conflict between the conscious and the unconscious.

Admittedly, the last lines are full of polemic and sarcasm. Nevertheless, I hope to have shown in points a. to d. that in several publications Adler was not necessarily polemical in expressing views that take us away from the assumption of a dynamic unconscious. Therefore, we can understand why some individual psychologists stick closely to Adler and become preoccupied with the topics of safeguarding, compensation, life style, symptom formation and so on, without considering in any detail many of the aspects that characterise the concept of the dynamic unconscious. All the same, whether one refers to Shulman's (1968) book, *Adlerian Approaches to the Treatment of Schizophrenia*, Nikelly's (1971) handbook, *Neurosis is Fiction*, or *Fundamentals of Adlerian Psychology* by Dreikurs (1950/1989), one rarely finds the following questions addressed:

- in which complex unconscious activities do human beings engage when they resist certain contents of experience?
- how complex, conflict-prone and urgent are the different contents of experience that precede the diverse processes of unconscious resistance?
- what "fate" do contents of experience suffer and what might that mean for the structure of the unconscious of a human being?

- in addition to individual psychological work, although almost never discussed, to what extent are so-called "normal" non-pathological manifest experience and behaviour rooted in complex unconscious activities (including resistance)?

It is exactly the manner in which these questions are dealt with (or not dealt with) that these Individual Psychology publications differ fundamentally from previously mentioned publications that follow a psychoanalytic interpretation of Individual Psychology and, as such, aim to consistently drive forward the "Microanalysis of Psychodynamic Processes" (Tenbrink, 1985, p. 44), as well as the analysis of the "The Conformity of the Natural Law of the Unconscious" (Presslich-Titscher, 1991, p. 264). These differences, which one can recount in a preliminary fashion, are not based on the way in which Adler's descendants understood (and understand) Individual Psychology. Because of these differences, contrary interpretations of Individual Psychology began to emerge even in Adler's own work, when he (explicitly and implicitly) challenged the assumption of the "dynamic unconscious" in an extreme and unambiguous way. Therefore, my first thesis :

*Thesis 1* - The conflicting interpretations of Individual Psychology, which are presently held within the International Association of Individual Psychology, were already laid out in Adler's writings because Adler obviously could not decide whether to accept or reject the assumption of a dynamic unconscious.

It is interesting to remind oneself that this ambiguity is by no means the only ambiguity in Adler's work: For example, if one looks into how Adler characterised psychotherapy of Individual Psychology, one also encounters two fundamentally different conceptions that correspond to Adler's ambiguous views about the concept of the dynamic unconscious. In the second and much



shorter part of this paper I should like to outline how this can be understood in the context of the present situation within the International Association for Individual Psychology.

### **3. The Concept of the Dynamic Unconscious and Adler's Understanding of Therapy**

In moving closer to Adler's understanding of psychotherapy, I should like to consider the 1913 publication, *Individual Psychological Treatment Of Neuroses* as a starting point. As is well known, the subchapter about "Psychological Treatment of Neuroses" begins:

"The uncovering of the neurotic system of the life style is the most important component of therapy. Because [the neurotic system] can only be preserved when a patient successfully withdraws it [the neurotic system] from his/her own criticism and understanding" (Adler 1913a, p. 58).

The "uncovering", which means becoming aware of the neurotic system or neurotic life style, is identified by Adler as the "most important component of therapy". He substantiates this with the argument that the neurotic system can only be resolved when the patient succeeds in two areas:

- to withdraw the unconscious resistance from this system, and
- to learn to understand the unconscious meaning of this system.

This characterisation of psychotherapy in Individual Psychology is reminiscent of Ansbacher's (1987) claim that in 1911 Adler admittedly broke with Freud's libido theory, but did not break with Freud's psychoanalytic method of treating neurotic patients. At this point I cannot discuss Ansbacher's explanation in detail, but the just-cited passage from Adler suggests that Adler followed Freud's combination of healing and exploring: In therapy we should be dealing with the gradual and sympathetic "exploration"

and "uncovering" of the currently dynamic and individual meaning of the patient's unconscious, whereby the process of exploration and uncovering itself should have a healing effect.

In order to implement the "programme" of the healing exploration of the dynamic unconscious, according to Freud, the observance of certain other perspectives and rules are required - for example the request for free association, the suggested reserve of the analyst, the possibility of the development and analysis of transference, etc. etc.

Yet it seems that Adler had a very similar perspective in mind when he wrote for example:

- that the "exposure of the neurotic life style" should take place in an "informal conversation" where one must "always be guided by the patient" (Adler, 1913a, p 60);
- that the therapist ought to practise reserve and avoid giving advice as well as avoid private contacts with patients (Adler, 1929c/1981, p. 89; 1933b/1973a, p 178);
- that healing can not be brought about by the therapist, but can only be brought about by the patient once he/she has understood his/her unconscious life style (Adler, 1913a, p 62); or
- that it is to be expected from the start of therapy that transference and resistance occur, and that is why both phenomena should be reflected upon from the beginning (Adler, 1913a, p 59).

It is typical today of those Adlerian psychotherapists who regard themselves as psychoanalysts to refer to passages like this. Especially in Germany and Austria, Individual Psychologists also share the assumption of a dynamic unconscious, which they try to explore in its complexity - not only in short-term and focal therapies, but also in long-term analysis that takes place three to four times weekly, over many years, in an armchair-sofa setting and in accordance with current standards of highly-frequented analysis.

When these Individual Psychologists present papers and talk about their experience of analysis at International Conferences, they inevitably come across a lack of understanding on the part of some other Individual Psychologists. In discussions, the latter group contend that undertaking a long analysis with the aim "to uncover the unconscious" is hardly compatible with Adler's understanding of Individual Psychology. This is because most of Adler's writing does not suggest the assumption of a dynamic unconscious. Admittedly it is conceded that Adler always referred to "uncovering". But by that he did not wish to convey the uncovering of the repressed but the clarification of: a) the safeguarding efforts and life style in which the patient's symptoms are rooted as well as b) the mistaken attitudes and beliefs on which the safeguarding efforts and life style are based.

As much as possible, the concern of the therapeutic process is the concentrated, focused marking of these contexts, which are expected to be made clear to the patient, and should the occasion arise, be explained. In addition, the concern is to help patients give up their mistaken convictions, to relinquish their safeguarding tendencies and to correct their life style, so that they no longer need their symptoms. This all requires a more active, directive approach on the part of the psychotherapist, which decidedly differs from the approach of the reserved, cautiously interpreting analyst. Following thesis 1, I should like to submit the following:

*Thesis 2* - Adler's ambiguity in relation to the question of whether a dynamic unconscious can be assumed or not, corresponds with his indecisiveness with regard to the introduction of the psychotherapy of Individual Psychology as a cognitive-therapeutic or as an analytic-interpreting procedure, which is directed at the "exploration" of unconscious contents of experience and activities. Accordingly, within the current

International Association of Individual Psychology, the answers to the questions regarding what characterises psychotherapy in Individual Psychology turn out to be conflicting.

#### 4. Summary and Conclusion

At the international level, the different interpretations of Individual Psychology that I have outlined repeatedly lead to the question of whether it is not sensible to split the International Society for Individual Psychology into an analytically-oriented society on the one side and a cognitive-therapeutically-oriented society on the other. Such suggestions are rooted in the conviction that these different interpretations of Individual Psychology are a hindrance to the further development of Individual Psychology.

I should like to counter that the effects of the repeated confrontation between different factions are largely constructive and motivate members to be clearer about their points of view and be more precise in their accounts in order to justify their different views. At present, within the International Association for Individual Psychology, we are far removed from a culture of open and constructive dialogue, but undoubtedly it would be worthwhile to commit ourselves to the development of such culture.

#### Footnotes

<sup>1</sup> My four-part characterisation of the concept of the dynamic unconscious is based on the above-cited papers, as well as the account of Laplanche & Pontalis (1967, p.562), Nagara (1974, p. 344) and Kohler (1993, p. 308). However, in this characterisation and in what follows I do not address: 1) Freud's tendency to employ scientific terminology in connection with the dynamic unconscious, nor 2) Freud's endeavour to link the concept of the dynamic unconscious with his drive theory and the Id. These points, which are dealt with in detail by Antoch (1981, p. 53) require a separate discussion. To take up Schafer (1976), Antoch (1981, 1983), as well as Datler & Reinelt (1989, p. 77), I should like simply to record here that the concept of the theory of the dynamic unconscious is by no means bound by an assumption of a biological drive theory or by an assumption

of psychic processes that lead an independent life on their own. Therefore, Adler's attempt to distance himself from such assumptions are to be differentiated from Adler's ambiguity about the concept of the dynamic unconscious as it is described in this manuscript.

<sup>2</sup> In this regard, one should not be overly zealous in distinguishing between the early and late Adler. I believe this is so not only because of contributions by Wengler (1994) and Antoch (1995), but also in view of the fact that Witte (1994) recently presented the young Adler's concept of neurosis without explicit reference to the unconscious, even though Witte's expressed intention was to show that the early Adler was a depth psychologist.

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